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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 002104

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PGOV PREL PTER PHUM MASS ECON PK

SUBJECT: USDP EDELMAN DISCUSSES SECURITY AND TERRORISM WITH MUSHARRAF

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶11. (C) Summary: Under Secretary for Defense Eric Edelman met with President Pervez Musharraf June 2 to discuss U.S. concerns regarding recent peace agreements in the border areas, Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts and U.S. security assistance. Portraying civilian government leaders as soft on terrorism, Musharraf said the key elements to successful peace agreements were evicting or eliminating al Qaeda, stopping illicit cross border movement and implementing harsh reprisals when agreements were broken. Musharraf stated the Frontier Corps did not require additional training, but stressed the need for equipment. Finally, in the wake of the bombing of the Danish Embassy in Islamabad, an unsympathetic Musharraf seemed to lay responsibility for the bombing at Denmark's feet, saying human rights and civil liberties ceased to be good when others were hurt and that Denmark had hurt millions (by publishing cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed). End summary.

USG CONCERNED AGREEMENTS WILL LEAD TO RISE IN CROSS-BORDER ATTACKS

¶12. (C) President Musharraf thanked U/S Edelman for his visit and then noted he had only just learned the U.S. also had tribes and "its own tribal issues." U/S Edelman acknowledged this, thanked Musharraf for the meeting and introduced his accompanying staff, including Major General Bobby Wilkes who was wearing civilian attire for this visit. This prompted Musharraf to comment that wearing a uniform became a habit, making it difficult to start out the morning without one.

¶13. (C) Noting that he was in Pakistan on behalf of the Secretary of Defense, U/S Edelman began by expressing respect for the sacrifices made by Pakistan forces in the war on terror and stressing that the U.S. relationship with Pakistan is a long-term commitment. He realized the civilian government had many issues to consider, including the critical economic situation, but was particularly concerned about how the government would address counterterrorism. The increasing attacks by militants based in Pakistan constituted a real threat to Pakistan, to coalition forces in Afghanistan, and to the United States. U/S Edelman informed Musharraf that the U.S. wanted to assist Pakistan in developing greater counterinsurgency capability; the U.S. had learned painful lessons in Afghanistan and Iraq that could benefit Pakistan. While the situations are different, the U.S. has valuable knowledge to share. U/S Edelman added that

the U.S. would also like to assist in training the Frontier Corps and strengthen support to Pakistan's security efforts in the border areas through the Security Development Plan.

¶ 14. (C) U/S Edelman added, however, that the U.S. does have some concerns regarding recent peace negotiations with tribesmen. The U.S. agrees there is no pure military solution to the rising insurgency, that the most effective approach would combine a variety of elements, including economic development and law enforcement. However, the U.S. is troubled, U/S Edelman said, by the prospect of troop withdrawal from areas in South Waziristan and the absence of effective enforcement mechanisms to ensure terms of agreements are met. The U.S. is concerned that militants will exploit the space created by Army redeployments to launch increased cross-border attacks into Afghanistan targeting coalition troops.

MUSHARRAF UNSYMPATHETIC TO BOMBING OF DANISH EMBASSY

¶ 15. (C) Before responding to U/S Edelman's remarks, President Musharraf stated that he would like to make a point about the car bombing of the Danish Embassy that had occurred less than an hour previously, leaving several dead and many injured. Referring to the controversial cartoons of Mohammed published in Denmark, Musharraf declared that human rights and civil liberties ceased being positive when they "start hurting others." He continued, "That's what I would say to Denmark; they hurt billions (with the cartoon of Mohammed.)" Musharraf then noted the film "The Last Temptation of Christ" had been the subject of controversy and condemnation in the

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U.S., among both Christians and Muslims. Musharraf concluded this topic, saying "We are extremely sensitive to ridicule."

PAKISTAN COMMITTED TO FIGHTING MILITANTS

¶ 16. (C) Musharraf then affirmed Pakistan's unwavering intention to fight terrorism. He said the central government, the provincial governments, the military, and the intelligence agencies were all committed. "Never doubt that each one of them wants to fight," he declared. The physical manifestation of this desire had been demonstrated and had been loudly and clearly articulated by Musharraf "almost single-handedly."

¶ 17. (C) Others, he said, "do it on our shoulders." Apparently referring to coalition government members (presumably Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Zardari and his cabinet), Musharraf said these people "talk to us privately (about counterterrorism) and say it on TV" but are not eager to act. They were, he said, on board with counterterrorism efforts, but "they don't want to follow through." Musharraf continued, "They say publicly the Army should act, but they don't mean it and don't want it." Musharraf added that he had been saying for years that solving the problem of extremism would require a multi-pronged approach, including political reform and socio-economic developments.

¶ 18. (C) Musharraf asserted that, by voting for secular parties in February's elections, people in the border areas had rejected extremism and opted for progress. Referring to the danger posed by creeping talibanism, Musharraf said that even he had been concerned when Maulana Fazlullah was broadcasting on illegal radio stations, calling for jihad in Swat and other areas. Musharraf had thought perhaps there were masses of militants planning an uprising, but instead there were 50 or 60 militants terrorizing townspeople like villains in an old Western film while the people "waited for the Magnificent Seven to rescue them." Musharraf said the GOP - the central and provisional governments, along with the Army - must act in unison to combat the insurgency, to show "we will crush it."

¶9. (C) Musharraf described civilian government leaders as "appeasers" and asserted that by sending out feelers to militant leaders, they empowered and encouraged the extremists. Instead, he said, they should negotiate from a position of strength and "show where they stand." Perhaps, he added, they were too afraid for their personal safety to do so.

THREE INGREDIENTS OF SUCCESSFUL PEACE AGREEMENT

¶10. (C) Musharraf indicated he supported peace agreements so long as they included three elements: 1) Al Qaeda must leave the area; 2) No cross-border activity; 3) An enforcement mechanism or harsh punishment for violating the agreement. All these elements were supposed to be in the South Waziristan agreement. The sticking point, he said, would be the ban on cross-border activities because the Massoud did not recognize the border with Afghanistan. Still, the President said strict implementation and monitoring would address this issue. If cross-border movement increases after an agreement is signed, he maintained, the military should act immediately. However, Musharraf believed the peace treaties would have a positive outcome - even if there were difficulties in implementation, it was the right direction for now. Regarding reported Army withdrawals in the tribal areas, Musharraf said these were "tactical redeployments," and force levels remained the same. He also noted that the Frontier Corps could move more easily in those areas than the Army because tribal communities are not generally supportive of an Army presence.

MUSHARRAF: FRONTIER CORPS NEEDS EQUIPMENT, NOT TRAINING

¶11. (C) U/S Edelman stressed the USG was committed to supporting Pakistan by enhancing the capabilities of the Frontier Corps, the Special Services Group, Border

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Coordination Centers, etc. He noted that along with over \$50M in DOD CN money, USD 75 million had been diverted from DOD operations to be focused on Frontier Corps this year, and he was hoping for a similar amount for next year, especially for training. Musharraf firmly stated the Frontier Corps needed no training, just equipment. He said the Frontier Corps had already received basic training from the Army; the Frontier Corps troops, he insisted, only needed "elementary infantry and weapons training." Musharraf described how the Frontier Corps structure had been reorganized to de-centralize command and control authority, creating four sectors. Now, each command sector needed tanks and guns. (Note: The Pakistan Army views itself as an elite force and accepting U.S. trainers could cause it to "lose face," as well as lend credence to charges that Pakistan's forces are serving as the USG's proxy in the war on terror. End Note.)

¶12. (U) This cable has been cleared by USD(P) Edelman.
PATTERSON